

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS**

COMPLETE STATEMENT

OF

**LIEUTENANT GENERAL ROBERT B. FLOWERS
CHIEF OF ENGINEERS
U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**

BEFORE

**THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

ON

**INDEPENDENT PEER REVIEW OF SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL, AND
ECONOMIC PRODUCTS THAT SUPPORT AGENCY DECISION-MAKING**

MARCH 5, 2003

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MR. CHAIRMAN AND DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE:

I am again honored to be testifying before you, along with Mr. Brownlee, the Under Secretary of the Army and Acting Assistant Secretary, on the independent peer review of scientific, technical, and economic products that support the Corps of Engineers decision-making on Civil Works projects.

First, let me state that the Corps is committed to an effective transformation that will ensure we meet the Nation's changing priorities and values regarding water resources in the 21st century. As Bertand Russell stated "Change is one thing, progress is another." I'm here today to share with you the progress the Corps has made in meeting our transformation goals, specifically the effective use of independent peer review. In our view, "independent peer review" means an objective review conducted by appropriate outside experts, external to the Army and the Corps of Engineers, as opposed to an internal review carried out by Corps experts.

The Corps planning process strives to address diverse, competing and often contradictory interests on water resources management, restoration, and development. For some large and complex studies, a group of outside experts may be required in order to inform my recommendation.

In response to concerns, we recently asked outside experts to review the geo-technical aspects of the proposal to increase the height of the existing Folsom Dam, the economic analysis of benefits and costs for the Delaware River Deepening project and the benefits analysis for the Columbia River Channel Improvement Project.

We have begun to use independent peer review on some of our complex projects. At our request, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) has established an independent peer review panel to review all aspects of the ongoing Louisiana Coastal Area Comprehensive Restoration Study. We will also request that the NAS establish a similar review panel on all elements of the restructured Upper Mississippi River-Illinois Waterway System Study. In the development of the CERP, we made extensive use of independent peer review. In 1999, the South Florida Restoration Task Force, with funding provided by the Department of Interior, established through the NAS the Committee on Restoration of the Greater Everglades Ecosystem (CROGEE). This group provides input to the Task Force on the implementation of Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). The CERP authorization in the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 required an independent peer review panel that will also provide feedback to Congress through the Secretary of the Army. We are in the process of establishing that panel in cooperation with the Secretary of Interior and the State of Florida. This panel will review the implementation of the CERP over an extended time.

As we move forward to transform the Corps, we will apply independent peer review to controversial project proposals. Our Fiscal Year 2004 Budget requests \$3 million to undertake independent peer reviews for those studies that will benefit from such reviews. In undertaking these reviews we will select studies in full consideration of project magnitude and risk independent peer review, and should facilitate the resolution of any concerns in a timely and effective manner.

CONCLUSION

The Corps of Engineers is committed to independent peer review for certain civil works water resources studies. We look forward to our continued role in meeting the water resource needs of the Nation.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. This concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other Members of the Subcommittee may have.